

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of claims:

Claims 1-25 (Cancelled)

Claim 26. (Amended): A floor covering material comprising a PVC layer and having aggregate embedded in the material for providing surface roughness wherein the material incorporates a barrier layer of polymeric material other than PVC fused into the upper surface of the PVC layer, the aggregate being embedded in the PVC layer and exposed at the upper surface of the barrier layer.

Claim 27. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the barrier layer is of a cured polymeric material.

Claim 28. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the barrier layer is of a thermoplastic material.

Claim 29. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the barrier layer is at least as flexible as the underlying PVC layer.

Claim 30. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the barrier layer is transparent or translucent.

Claim 31. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the polymeric material of the barrier layer provides enhanced dirt release and/or stain resistance in comparison to the PVC.

Claim 32. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the barrier layer comprises a polyolefin, (co-)polyester, (co-)polyamide, polyurethane, phenol formaldehyde, epoxy or acrylic polymer or a mixture thereof.

Claim 33. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the floor covering material has an embossed surface.

Claim 34. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 26 wherein the aggregate is quartz, corundum, and/or silicon carbide.

Claim 35 (Amended). A method of producing a floor covering material comprising

(a) spreading a PVC plastisol on a substrate,
(b) distributing over the surface of the plastisol a powder of a film forming, heat fusible polymeric material other than PVC and a particulate aggregate material, and

(c) effecting heating to fuse the plastisol and convert the powder into a film,

steps (b) and (c) being effected such that the aggregate is embedded in the PVC and exposed at the upper surface of the film.

Claim 36. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 35 wherein the powder is distributed over the plastisol prior to the aggregate material.

Claim 37. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 35 wherein the powder applied to the plastisol is softened prior to distribution of the aggregate.

Claim 38. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 35 wherein the powder is distributed over the plastisol simultaneously with the aggregate.

Claim 39. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 35 wherein the aggregate is distributed over the plastisol prior to the powder.

Claim 40. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 39 wherein excess powder is removed from the plastisol prior to step (c).

Claim 41. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 39 wherein excess powder is removed by suction.

Claim 42. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 35 wherein the powder is a thermoplastic material.

Claim 43. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 40 wherein the powder is of a curable resin system.

Claim 44. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 40 wherein said resin system is cured by heat and curing is effected in step (c).

Claim 45. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44 wherein the resin system is curable by UV-radiation.

Claim 46. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 45 wherein UV curing is effected subsequent to step (c).

Claim 47. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 45 wherein the powder comprises a polyolefin, (co-)polyester, (co-)polyamide, polyurethane, phenol formaldehyde, epoxy or acrylic polymer or a mixture thereof.

Claim 48. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 45 wherein embossing is applied subsequent to step (c).

Claim 49. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 45 wherein the aggregate is quartz, corundum and/or silicon carbide.

Claim 50. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 45 wherein the powder incorporates at least one of a flow modifying agent, a flame retardant, a biocide, a gloss modifier and a matting agent.